

THE
Membership Voice of
Zonta International

ZONTIAN

Advancing the Status of Women Worldwide



THE ZONTIAN

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DID YOU KNOW...



Zonta International moved its headquarters office to Oak Brook, Illinois in February. This has been an exciting time for the staff and board alike as we settle into our new and modern surroundings on the ninth floor at 1211 West 22nd Street.

We are especially proud of this new office building, where we are situated in one of the two towers of the Oak Brook Executive Plaza. In addition to a larger and more modern layout, the new offices also boast a tremendous amount of natural sunlight; while majority of the staff windows face north, the board room looks east with a view of Chicago's unmistakable skyline. We are also happy to have such a nice space to display the many Zontian artifacts that members and clubs have graciously donated.

We look forward to providing you with a full photographic tour of the office space soon! In the meantime, please see a photo featuring a portion of the board room. (We are adding new decorations daily!)



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Beryl Sten

“Women as economic actors and as productive assets are essential and beneficial to society”

2009 marks two milestones of working towards women’s rights and gender equality:

- 90th anniversary of Zonta International
- 30th anniversary of CEDAW (UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women)

The objectives of Zonta International include improvement of the legal, political, economic, educational, health and professional status of women at the global and local level through service and advocacy.

How we achieve these goals as a non-governmental organization that is nonpartisan and nonsectarian is a question that we are frequently asked. To be nonpartisan and nonsectarian means that Zonta is not a member of/affiliated with any political party or religious sect. Zonta is free to **advocate** for our goals which we adopt at conventions and those included in our international bylaws. Our Legislative Awareness and Advocacy (LAA) and UN Committees have recently published a power-point tool for our districts/clubs/members for their use. It gives guidance, examples and suggestions on how to develop our skills in advocating for women’s rights. Furthermore, a template letter has been developed to support Governors and Clubs in the United States in advocating for the ratification of the CEDAW convention by the United States government.

Gender inequalities

Today there is consensus about the strong correlation between sustainable development and gender equality. Gender inequalities remain pervasive worldwide. There are many inequalities and the gender gap persists. We must ask ourselves how we, as Zontians, can advocate in our countries to eliminate gender discrimination in various areas such as:

Equal pay for equal work

The principle for equal pay for equal work value has gained wide acceptance and is reflected in several ILO conventions, yet gaps in earnings between women and men remain among the most persistent forms of inequality in the labor market. This is due not only to a lack of the application of the principle of equal pay, but also to a lack of equal opportunities. OECD data for 2007 indicates female participation rates in the labor force at 86.4% in Iceland but only 27.2% in Turkey. Countries with the highest rates of women in the workforce are Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Canada, New Zealand, USA, UK, Australia, France – all are above the OECD average.

Equal pay factors which contribute to the earnings gap are the undervaluation of women’s skills and women’s lower share of discretionary payments. These include over-award/bonus payments, increments, commissions as well as limited opportunities for overtime or shift work which adds to income.

Equal opportunity factors which have a detrimental effect on women’s income relative to men include occupational and industry segregation, access to education and training, the impact of family responsibilities and predominance in part-time and casual employment.

UNIFEM’s report “Progress of the World’s Women 2008-2009” indicates that many women fall through the cracks of the global campaign against poverty because they are more likely than men to hold jobs that pay less and offer less job security. In developing nations, 60% or more of women workers outside the agricultural sector are in “informal” employment. This means temporary or

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

part-time jobs; self-employment; or work for piece-rate payment. In the farming sector this proportion is even higher. These women are concentrated in jobs where earnings are not only very low but highly unreliable. The further down the chain of job quality and security, the more women you find.

Inequalities in pension and retirement benefits

Women also experience inequalities in pension and retirement benefits. Women live longer than men and, in most cases, they are likely to spend long periods of time as widows. Many older women have little income security in old age due to their unequal attachment to the labor force as evidenced above (part-time, casual work, interrupted work patterns for family reasons etc). In some communities, widows are “cast out” (a cultural practice) and have no support from family or governments.

Equalizing Women in the Workplace

Recruitment and hiring

Encourage recruitment of candidates in occupations predominantly held by men and eliminate all forms of discrimination based on gender stereotypes.

Career promotion

Assure participation of women in decision-making and governance. Worldwide women occupy less than 3% of the top executive positions in the largest corporations. Globally women hold only 15% of the seats in parliaments. Promote and support women as economic actors and productive assets. This is essential and beneficial to society.

Women's health

All forms of violence against women are detrimental to women's health, whether it is verbal or physical violence. Ensure that women have equal access to adequate health care specific to their needs and location, especially in non-metropolitan areas.

Education

Encourage women and girls to enter nontraditional fields of professions and provide educational support and vocational development.

In the 2008 Global Gender Gap Report published by World Economic Forum no country has yet achieved gender equality in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, or health and survival. The closest to reach parity between men and women are four Nordic countries – Norway, Finland, Sweden and Iceland – each of which have managed to close approximately 80% of the gender gap in these four critical



areas. We can make progress in gender equality through advocacy in the above areas.

Conclusion – there is a lot more to do to improve women's rights!

The Commission on Status of Women

On February 25, 2008, at the opening of the Commission on Status of Women at United Nations Headquarters, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon launched his campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women, with the overall objective to raise public awareness and increase the political will and resources for preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls in all parts of the world. The Secretary-General called on governments, civil society, women's organizations, young people, the private sector, artists, the media, the entire United Nations system, and individual women and men, to join forces in addressing the global pandemic of violence against women and girls.

Zonta International has, over many years, established co-operation with, and support for, UNIFEM/UN Trust Fund activities to eliminate violence against women. We are responding to the Secretary-General's campaign not only through our ZISVAW program, but also through all of our international service projects and by combining service and advocacy.

The Commission on the Status of Women held its fifty-third session on March 2-13, 2009. The theme was “The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS”.

Zonta International submitted a statement to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in which we hold General Consultative Status. Together with like-minded non-governmental organizations, Zonta International submitted three more statements.

These statements by Zonta International indicate that:

- “Zonta International supports the full implementation by each signatory country of the commitments made to the CEDAW Convention as a framework for establishing substantive equality between women and men in both private and public spheres.”
- “Legislative and policy initiatives, the allocation of resources by Governments and from other resources, the engagement of both men and women and, in particular, the empowerment of women are all necessary to move forward toward the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men.”

Emerging issues like the global financial crisis are bound to negatively impact on the lives of women. Zontians are trustworthy – we have democratically adopted these International Service and ZISWAV projects and promised to provide financial support to fund them. Please let us keep our promises to these women who rely on us to fulfill our commitments. DONATE to our Foundation!

Without education there can be no gender equality, no progress and no prosperity.

Zonta is proud of its three educational programs, which cover three separate fields at three different levels of education!

Women in Need – need our help and donations NOW!

Zonta's Service and Award Programs

Over the years Zonta, through its international service projects, has addressed some of the important issues for women's rights and gender equality in the context of CSW's priority theme. We continue to do so in our International Service and ZISVAW projects this Biennium:

- Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV in Rwanda, a country that suffers extremely hard from the after-effects of genocide;
- Safe Cities for Women in Guatemala City and San Salvador. Guatemala and El Salvador have rates of urban violence and violent homicides well above the regional level;
- Reduction of Obstetric Fistula in Liberia, a country in the stage of recovery following 15 years of crisis due to civil war;
- Ending violence against women in Cambodia, with the aim to, inter alia, provide legal aid to women victims of violence;
- Combating physical violence against women in Egypt, supporting, for example, the decree on prohibiting the performance of genital mutilation;
- A community-based center for women victims of violence in Syria.

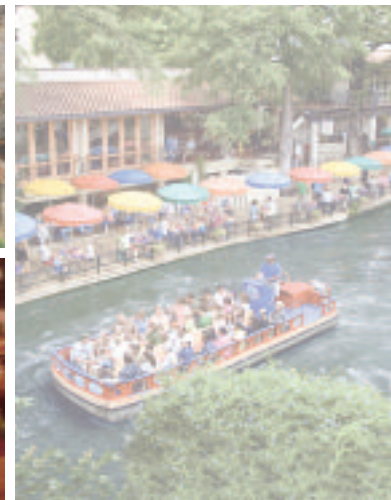
- Amelia Earhart Fellowships are awarded to women for graduate study in aerospace-related science and engineering;
- Jane M Klausman Women in Business Scholarships support women undergraduate students preparing for careers in business management;
- Young Women in Public Affairs Awards honor young women in secondary level or pre-university schools who demonstrate a commitment to leadership in public affairs, public policy and community service.

These women award winners at club, district and international levels are our future and we have promised them our support in their careers. Your donation will be welcomed and appreciated.

Although unemployment in the industrialized countries is increasing we need to honor our objectives. Let us unite together as members in our clubs and districts to help each other through these hard economic times. Close friends may be affected by the financial crisis and need our support. Let them know that we care and will take the time to listen and assist where possible.

Beryl Steen

SAN ANTONIO 2010: 25 JUNE – 30 JUNE 2010



A Texas-Style Celebration for the Whole Family



Zontians and their families are promised some Texas-size hospitality when they come to San Antonio for the Zonta International Convention in 2010. In the Alamo City, there's plenty to do and see – whatever your age or interest.

From its beautiful Riverwalk to a first place seat at an action-packed Texas rodeo to world class museums, golf courses and adventure parks – San Antonio and the surrounding Texas Hill Country have it all. Austin, the Texas capital, and San Marcos, home to the world's biggest outlet shopping mall are just down the road. For those who would like to experience even more of the neighboring area, there are the colorful and ethnically-diverse and historic towns of New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, Gruene, Wimberley that Luckenbach. There is so much to see and do you might want to take a few extra days to sample it all. With the economy being what it is and the lower value of the US dollar, you will probably get some great deals.

As for the convention itself, everything will be conveniently located at our headquarters venue: the Marriott Rivercenter and Marriott Riverwalk Hotel. Convention headquarters is located steps away from the San Antonio Riverwalk as well as many of San Antonio's famous landmarks, shopping, dining and the city's most popular entertainment spots. The wonderfully appointed hotel guestrooms come equipped with cable and satellite television as well as high speed wireless internet access. There's great food on the premises and at nearby restaurants.

After a rousing and inspiring opening ceremony Saturday afternoon, you will be taken by bus to the Knibbe Ranch in the beautiful Texas Hill Country, with its rolling hills and sparkling springs. Here you will have a chance to observe a real Texas rodeo – with bull-riding and barrel racing, and a chance to test your newly-learned line dancing skills on the dance floor. For those who prefer to just listen, we will have a great band playing the best of country and some “good ole rock ‘n roll.” You will also have a chance to meet Oreo the Bull, made famous by our bull-riding Zonta International President Beryl Sten. It's definitely a family-style event, so bring along the little buckaroos.

And while you are attending meetings, your family and friends can visit the Alamo and the numerous other museums and historic sites in the city, spend some time on the golf course, or enjoy thrill rides at one of the numerous theme parks in the area, such as SeaWorld or Six Flags Fiesta. No one will be bored – WE PROMISE!

Mark your calendars now, and plan on bringing the family. June 2010 will be here before you know it! Darlene Kurtz, our convention chairman, and your hosts in District 10 can't wait to welcome you.

Y'ALL COME!



More than 2,000 Zontians came together in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, for an unforgettable 59th Zonta International Convention last July.



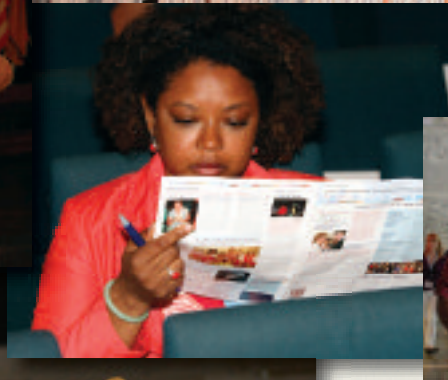
Highlights
Convention
2008
Rotterdam

Global Empowerment Through Local Action



Friday the 27th of June through Wednesday the 2nd of July 2008, two thousand Zontians from sixty-seven countries gathered in Rotterdam for the 59th Zonta International Convention. The host venue for the event was the beautiful de Doelen, which houses both a concert hall and convention center. Keynote speakers were Professor Akua Kuenyehia, the first vice president of the International Criminal Court, the Hague and Professor Thea Hilhorst, a professor of humanitarian aid and reconstruction at Wageningen University in the Netherlands.





“...If everyone in Zonta mentored two women and those women you mentored passed on the favour, very soon 132,000 successful women would have benefited from this. If they passed on the favour once again, we’d have a quarter of a million people in just a few years. There would be a snowball effect – we could make a really big difference. ... do what you can to help and inspire other women ...”



FRIDAY, 27 JUNE The beginning of the convention was marked by a flag hoisting event. ❖ As the first Zontian to register for the 2008 Convention, 2008-2010 District 6 Governor Buffie Kelly earned the opportunity to raise the United States flag. Registration began in the morning, followed by district meetings in the afternoon. ❖ To celebrate the gathering of so many Zontians, immediate past president Olivia Ferry made a special gift to the foundation in honor of District 18, the District with the largest percentage of participating members: for every Zontian in attendance from District 18, past International President Ferry donated US\$2 to the foundation.

SATURDAY, 28 JUNE The 59th Zonta International Convention opened with the posting of colors. The ceremony began with the entrance of the flag of the host country, the Netherlands, carried by Lea Laarakker, a Dutch Zontian now living in Thailand. The Dutch flag was followed by the flag of the Philippines, in honor of 2006-2008 Zonta International President Olivia Ferry, which was followed by the flag of Zonta International. The flags of each of the Zonta countries were carried on stage by their country representatives in order of the establishment of Zonta in that country. ❖ Past President Olivia Ferry welcomes convention attendees. ❖ A new Zonta Rose was presented by Past President Olivia Ferry and Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Maria van der Hoeven. The rose was named the Zonta+ rose during the opening ceremony. The new bright yellow T-Hybrid rose was developed by breeder Lex+ in the Netherlands and introduced to the Dutch market in February 2007.

SUNDAY, 29 JUNE A Memorial Service was held to remember and pay tribute to Zontians who had passed away during the prior Biennium. It also marked the first day of business sessions, which continued through Tuesday and covered a broad range of topics. The sessions began when European Commissioner Nellie Kroes delivered a talk on the status of women in Europe and the western world. Zontians were given the opportunity to meet the candidates for the 2008-2010 Biennium, and to ask them questions. ❖ In the evening a program called “Going Dutch” allowed Zontians to meet Dutch families in informal venues over dinner. ❖ Finally, a full day was complete with the Zonta International Foundation Reception was given for select foundation donors.



“...Zonta’s Course for the Future and our 2006-2008 biennial goals emphasize the importance of advocacy in accomplishing our mission. ...we released two position papers. ... *Trafficking of Women and Girls* ... The second paper strongly endorses policies, legislation and programs that support and improve women’s and girls’ access and full participation in science, mathematics and technology education and professional advancement...”

Olivia Ferry
Zonta International President
2006-2008



MONDAY, 30 JUNE Monday marked the day that Zontians voted on the leadership for the 2008-2010 Biennium. In addition to this important election, Zontians enjoyed a civic reception generously provided by the city of Rotterdam. ❖ The Lord Mayor of Rotterdam, Mr. Ivo Opstelten, welcomed all Zontians and their guests to the Laurenskerk, a church that remains the city’s only late-Gothic building that has survived from Rotterdam’s medieval origins.

TUESDAY, 1 JULY On Tuesday, a mixture of fun and business prevailed. Zontians enjoyed Mediterranean and Caribbean foods at during a culinary adventure dubbed the Lustful Luncheon, which included belly dance performances and other entertainment. This was followed by break out sessions which focused on corporate social responsibility. Zontians attended the programs based on interest; each sessions related to the convention’s theme of Global Empowerment through Action.

WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY Wednesday began with the Installation Ceremony of the 2008-2010 District Governors and the Zonta International Board. Afterwards, Zontians enjoyed an outdoor picnic in Rotterdam’s Old West Park. Later in the day, a Gala Concert was performed by the world-famous Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, led by female conductor, Ms. Xian Zhang and made possible by sponsors ABN AMRO Bank N.V. The day ended with a final farewell party, which lasted until midnight, and marked a the last occasion for all Zontians to celebrate the 59th Zonta International Convention.



A MEMORABLE VISIT TO TAIWAN AND THE PHILIPPINES

By Jackie Shapiro, Chairman, Zonta International United Nations Committee

When I was in Rotterdam, I mentioned to Vivienne Shen that I had been invited by the Foundation for Women's Rights Promotion and Development to give some presentations about CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) in October, and to dialogue with women

remarks at the Double-Ten Tea Party of the National Women's League, whose President is the esteemed Zonta member, Cecelia Koo. The League, founded in 1950, now focuses its efforts on social welfare programs. From the enthusiasm of the more than 300 attendees, including many diplomats, the League's work is making a real impact.

ratified the CEDAW Convention.

District 31 held a luncheon attended by about 150 members from all over Taiwan and graciously organized by District UN Chairman, Sylvia Chang of the ZC of Taipei II. I delivered one of my CEDAW presentations and was showered with thoughtful gifts from many of the clubs attending.

The next day began the activities that brought me to Taiwan. The women's organizations of Taiwan are beginning in earnest to embark on a project to write an alternative report to the CEDAW Convention. In 2007, Taiwan expressed to the United Nations its willingness to become a State Party to the CEDAW Convention. However, the UN Secretary General was not able to accept their document as Taiwan is



Amy Lai hosts dinner for Zontians and Taiwanese friends

in Taiwan about using the Convention to promote women's rights there. She immediately suggested that, if the timing was right, I should try to be there for the famous Double Ten, the Taiwanese Independence celebration. I was anxious to return to Taiwan, where I had visited the previous summer and enjoyed the ever generous hospitality of our Zonta sisters, organized graciously by Amy Lai.

I had been invited to make a few

That night, the 10/10 celebration, Amy and Dorothy Lin and I were invited to the National Guest House for the festivities, including the spectacular Taiwanese opera on the lawn. As a special honor for me, Cecelia had arranged a private interview with the First Lady of Taiwan. We chatted about the purpose of my visit and she was surprised to learn that the United States is one of the few countries that have not yet

A **shadow report** to CEDAW is written by an NGO or group of NGOs and provides additional information to the CEDAW Committee regarding the official report of a Member State. The "shadow report" usually elaborates on an issue or issues of concern to which the official report has given little or no attention.

An **alternative report** is one submitted when there is no official report from the Member State, either because none was written or because it was not submitted yet, so it could not be the basis on which NGOs reported.

currently not a Member State of the United Nations. It is, however, my opinion and that of others, that since the government of Taiwan was willing to undertake the legally binding treaty obligations of the CEDAW Convention to establish gender equality and women's rights, women's organizations could evaluate progress and obstacles to achieving these commitments using the CEDAW Convention as the standard.



Left to Right: Cecelia Koo; Jackie Shapiro; First Lady of Taiwan, Christine Chow Ma; Wife of Foreign Minister of Taiwan, Lena Ou

Over a three-day-period, I presented two papers, one for two different audiences at the Taiwan Women's Center on the *Mechanisms of the Alternative Report* and one on *CEDAW as a Tool for Promoting Substantive Gender Equality* at the National Taiwan University. At the conclusion of these meetings, NGO participants, whose expertise in women's affairs ranged included law, labor, health, trafficking and violence against women, committed to participate in work groups, and to produce an alternative report to the CEDAW Convention for Taiwan by Spring 2009.

It is a goal of the Zonta International United Nations Committee and the Zonta International Advocacy Committee to encourage Zonta members in every Zonta country to become involved in writing NGO alternative or "shadow" reports on government progress in fulfilling their legal obligations to the women of their country. Every four years States Parties are required to

submit to the CEDAW Committee for thorough review a report on progress made, particularly in areas of concern that the Committee identified in the last reporting. The Committee appreciates NGO information and has created opportunities for NGOs to make written submissions or oral statements when each country is reporting.

Because I was making a trip to Asia my friend Erlinda Panlilio, invited me to visit the Philippines to participate in the District 17 UN Day Celebration with around 300 attending, including



Jackie Shapiro, Erlinda Panlilio

Governor Narudee Kiengsiri from Thailand.

I spoke about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as the District is in process of making a declaration to support them. It was also timely because the UN had just held a meeting on 25 September to evaluate where the world stands in fulfilling the MDGs by the target date of 2015. It is clear that much more attention needs to be paid to accelerating gender equality and empowering women, as women are acknowledged to be central to the achievement of all the MDGs.

I visited the Community Center of the Centennial Village in Taguig, supported by the ZC of Makati and Environs. This Center supports 780 families. We also visited a housing project for low-income families that the Club is currently in the process of building, and will eventually provide 40 family housing units. I then had the opportunity to visit the Marillac Hills Psychological Center - a center for sexually abused young women and girls (ages 6-17). The Center houses between 200 and 700 girls at any given time. The Club supports much needed psychological services. Other support for the Center comes from government and private funding.

When I left Manila I thought to myself once again how fortunate I am to have had the opportunity to make this trip and how much I owe to all my Zonta sisters. I must single out Amy, Linda and Livie for making it the unbelievably wonderful experience that it was.

Thank you all!

According to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2008:

- Of the 113 countries that have failed to achieve gender parity in both primary and secondary school enrolment by the target date of 2005, only 18 are likely to achieve the goal by 2015.
- Almost two thirds of employed women in the developing world are in vulnerable jobs as own account or unpaid family workers.
- In one third of developing countries, women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians.
- More than 500,000 prospective mothers in developing countries die annually from childbirth or of complications from pregnancy.



Community Center of the Centennial Village in Taguig; with clean-birthing kits distributed by the Center

Amelia Earhart Fellowship Program

*By Ellen Smith
Zonta International
Program Coordinator*

It is often mentioned that in the first two years in which the Amelia Earhart Fellowships were offered, there was not a single qualified applicant. Seventy years later, the International Amelia Earhart Committee will have the unenviable task of evaluating the amazingly qualified candidates to determine which 35 scholars will be granted the prestigious AE Fellowship.

Meeting early this year, they will pour over pages of transcripts, recommendations and essays from distinguished women at the top of male-dominated fields. Under the skilled Chairmanship of 1976-1977 Fellow Holly Anderson, of the Zonta Club of Toronto, familiar AE Committee Members Candace Kohl and Susan Riding will be joined by Susanna Zerbini. An AE Fellow in both 1973-1974 and 1975-1976, Susanna joined the Zonta Club of Bologna in 1983 and was tapped by Zonta International President Beryl Sten to serve on the AE Committee this Biennium.

Susanna brings a unique perspective to the Committee as the only university professor among the ranks, rounding out a group already consisting of distinguished past AE Fellows who moved on to become Zontians. She has over twenty years of experience in teaching, research and publishing on the application of space techniques to geodesy and



geodynamics – the study of regional and local deformations of the Earth's crust; in particular, monitoring, interpreting and modeling short- and long-term vertical motions by means of the Global Positioning System and other space techniques and high-

precision terrestrial gravimetry. Susanna's acute awareness of the realities of today's PhD program will undoubtedly make her contributions to the committee invaluable.

Susanna replaces Monika Auweter-Kurtz who stepped down from the AE



L-R, Holly Anderson, Susan Riding and Candace Kohl

Committee at the end of the 2006-2008 Biennium after being named President of the University of Hamburg, Germany in 2006. Monika, an AE Fellow in 1979-1980 and 1980-1981 and member of the Zonta Club of Stuttgart, became the first female president of the university and highlighted some of her actions and theories in a thoughtful keynote speech at the 2008 Rotterdam Convention in July. Addressing the topic of “Improving Career Paths Toward Leading Positions for Women in Science and Technology,” Monika noted some of the alarming statistics when it comes to the access to and prevalence of women and girls in science and technology fields of study and employment – not in breaking into these areas, but in achieving higher levels of success. Concluding with her thesis for improving this situation, she noted that nearly 40% of newly appointed scientists at the University of Hamburg are female professors, taking all disciplines into account. It is clear that in her role as President of the University of Hamburg, she continues to fulfill her Zontian duty of advancing the status of women worldwide.

More recent classes of AE Fellows are also forging ahead in the name of science and technology. In 2006,

Claire Tomlin was granted a “Genius Award” from the MacArthur Foundation. Officially called the MacArthur Fellowship, the award is given to approximately 20 individuals each year, and is famously a no-strings-attached US\$500,000 grant paid out over five years. According to the MacArthur Foundation, the grant is “an investment in a person’s originality, insight and potential.” Zonta recognized the same qualities in Claire a decade prior and awarded her two AE Fellowships, in 1996-1997 and again in 1997-1998. Claire is both a professor and doctoral student advisor in the Aeronautics and Astronautics department at Stanford University and the Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences department at the University of California Berkeley. She has published numerous academic papers and continues her award-winning research on topics including hybrid control systems and air traffic control automation.



Dr. Monika Auweter-Kurtz, President of the University of Hamburg, AE Fellow

Another notable Fellow from the 1990s is Naoko Sumino Yamazaki. A 1994-1995 Fellow and native of Chiba, Japan, Naoko was selected in 1999 by Japan’s National Space Development Agency (NASDA) as one of three Japanese astronaut candidates for the International Space

Station (ISS) and was certified as an astronaut in September 2001. In June 2004, she began the certification process to become a Mission Specialist (MS) at the NASA Johnson Space Center (JSC) and was certified in February 2006. In May 2006, she was selected as a crew support astronaut throughout the training for the space shuttle mission for the first launch of the Japanese Experiment Module, *Kibo*, to the International Space Station (ISS). It was announced in November 2008 that she will be the second Japanese woman in space when she fulfills scheduled travel to the International Space Station (ISS) for 14 days on the Atlantis in February 2010, or later. Naoko has been an active AE Fellow representative in her native Japan, helping the Zonta Clubs of Tokyo I and II celebrate Amelia Earhart Day (January 11) in 2004 by speaking about her experiences as an astronaut and member of the international space station team at a Zonta luncheon.

Even the most recent classes of AE Fellows are off to an impressive start – the 2008 Fellows continue to represent diverse subsections of a distinct field – devoting their research to aeronautics, physics, planetary science, and various types of engineering in order to pursue careers in the aerospace field. Already notable 2008 Fellows have taken on faculty roles, provided assistance to NASA and needless to say, contributed to groundbreaking research across the board. Additionally, many of the Fellows have noted their dedication to mentoring a younger generation of girls to pursue education and careers in the science and engineering fields. The 2009 class will no doubt be an equally imposing group – the top one-third selected from the 105 applications received this year.

While diverse in age, geography and specific fields of study, all the AE Fellows have in common their embodiment of the Zonta mission – advancing the status of women worldwide.

2008-2010 INTERNATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM:

REDUCING OBSTETRIC FISTULA IN LIBERIA



By *Cathe Wood*

the needs of women. Like maternal mortality, fistula is almost entirely preventable. A simple surgery can normally repair the injury, with success rates as high as 90 percent for experienced surgeons. This operation requires specially trained surgeons and support staff, as well as two or more weeks of post-operative care. Careful screening and management prior to surgery is necessary due to the presence of other health conditions such as malnutrition, anemia and malaria. Sadly, most women with the condition are not aware of, cannot afford or cannot reach services even when available. It has been estimated that approximately 7,000 women are treated annually – just 10 percent of new cases – barely touching the backlog of 2 million women or more.

The average cost of fistula treatment and post-operative care is just US\$300. Few health facilities are able to provide fistula treatment due to

the limited number of health professionals with appropriate skills. In addition, staff, equipment and space shortages are common.³ Successful fistula repair depends on teams of skilled practitioners supporting one another and delivering a continuum of care.

After surgery, most women can resume full and

Obstetric fistula is a devastating childbirth injury that leaves women incontinent, ashamed and often isolated from their communities. It is a stunning example of poor maternal and reproductive health, and an indication of unacceptably high levels of maternal death and disability. At least two million women in Africa, Asia and the Arab region are living with the condition, and some 50,000 to 100,000 new cases develop each year. For every woman affected by fistula, another six or seven have died from obstructed labor (Doctors Without Borders).

Affecting the most powerless members of society, obstetric fistula occurs disproportionately among impoverished girls and women, especially those living far from medical services in rural communities in developing countries. Obstetric fistula is uncommon in countries where

births are attended by skilled medical workers and emergency care workers are available and where women can determine the number of their children.

The persistence of fistula is a signal that health systems are failing to meet



productive lives. They can usually bear more children, though delivery by caesarean section is recommended to prevent fistula from reoccurring. But surgery is only the first step; because of the social and psychological consequences, women also need support to rebuild self-esteem and to reintegrate into society, especially if they have been living with the condition for many years. In many cases, the disability has eroded their social and economic status or worn away their sense of self worth. Full recovery may require counseling services, peer support groups, literacy and vocational skills training, and health education. Community sensitization helps to correct misperceptions surrounding the condition.

cure is possible may become resigned, demoralized or deeply depressed. While some women with fistula display amazing courage and resilience, many succumb to illness and despair. Suicide and high rates of depression have been reported among women living with the condition.

Debunking myths and providing accurate information about its causes and cure can facilitate prevention, encourage compassion and lessen the stigma. The knowledge that fistula is treatable can spell hope for women on the verge of giving up. By educating communities about fistula prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, lives can be transformed.

Poverty is the primary root cause of obstetric fistula because it is associated

"The consequences of fistula are life shattering. The baby often dies and the woman is left with chronic incontinence, greatly diminishing her prospects for work and family life."

– Thoraya Ahmed Obaid
Executive Director, UNFPA

In many places, obstetric fistula is so misunderstood that no word or phrase describes the condition precisely: it is referred to simply as "the urine problem" or "the childbirth injury." A woman with fistula may be characterized as "destroyed" or "she who is no longer a woman." Fistula survivors are often barred from preparing food and may be excluded from prayer or other religious observances. The injury leaves women with few opportunities to earn a living, and some may turn to begging. The pain and loneliness associated with fistula is often compounded by a sense of shame. In some communities, the condition is perceived not as a medical condition, but as a punishment or a curse for an assumed wrongdoing. Many women with fistula are isolated and hear little of developments in the outside world. Those unaware that a

with poor health, stunted growth, early childbearing and limited access to maternal health care. Childbearing before the pelvis is fully developed, as well as malnutrition and small stature, put women and girls at greater risk for obstructed labor. Gender inequities, including lack of schooling and power within a household, often conspire to prevent a woman from planning her pregnancies or arranging for appropriate obstetric care.

Poverty robs women of choices and closes off options. In some cultures, families believe that early marriage can protect a girl's reputation and secure her future. But it can also mean the denial of the right to education, good health, economic opportunity, friendship and the freedom to choose whom, when or whether to marry.

In addition to being a major public health concern, obstetric fistula is – by

What is obstetric fistula?

Obstetric fistula is a hole in the birth canal caused by a protracted, obstructed labour without prompt medical intervention, usually a Caesarean section. The woman is left with chronic incontinence and, in most cases, a stillborn baby. The smell of leaking urine or faeces, or both, is constant and humiliating, often driving loved ones away. Left untreated, fistula can lead to chronic medical problems, including ulcerations, kidney disease, and nerve damage in the legs.

Fistulas are virtually unheard of in developed countries due to the use of cesarean sections and other treatments that prevent prolonged, obstructed labor, but they are still common in poor, rural areas.

Three hundred US dollars for surgery, post-Operative care, and rehabilitation is a small price to restore a woman's health and dignity. UNFPA estimates that:

- \$5 covers the weekly costs of food and water,
- \$10 covers transportation to a hospital,
- \$60 covers a Caesarean section, and
- \$80 covers the surgical instruments needed for fistula surgery.

Where fistula is common, so too are unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality:

Of the more than 536,000 maternal deaths in 2005, 99 per cent occurred in developing countries.¹

A woman living in Niger has a 1 in 7 lifetime risk of dying in childbirth or pregnancy.

In Sweden, the risk is about 1 in 30,000.²

any standard – an issue of rights and equity. The continued existence of fistula in resource-poor areas is evidence of the profound social and institutional neglect of girls and women. Yet policymakers and health providers often fail to recognize the scope and severity of this disability. The absence of preventive care, including emergency obstetric care, violates the human rights of women and girls, especially their right to health care and, in particular, to reproductive health care.

Ending the needless deaths and suffering of women and girls worldwide is critical to development. One of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) calls for a 75 percent reduction in maternal mortality by 2015. Yet progress towards this goal, sanctioned by 189 countries in 2000, remains slow. Moreover, in some countries maternal



deaths and injuries are on the rise. Yet there are grounds for hope. Governments, even in the poorest countries, can deliver effective interventions provided there is the will to do so.

Fistula prevention is a matter of improving maternal health. The aim is to make pregnancy and childbirth safer from the start and, to ensure that women are able to obtain timely emergency obstetric care. Three key

areas for immediate action are family planning, skilled medical care at birth and access to emergency obstetric care. In the long run, poverty eradication, delayed childbearing and the empowerment of women and girls will also reduce the risk of obstetric fistula.

In 2008-2010 Zonta International is responding to this need by providing US\$450,000 to UNFPA for its work to reduce obstetric fistula in Liberia. Liberia is a country still recovering



Film Highlights the Struggle of Fistula Survivors

The award-winning documentary, *A Walk to Beautiful*, follows the journeys of Ayehu, Zewdie, Almaz, Yenenesh and Wubete to Addis Ababa to seek treatment for the devastating childbirth injury that has left each of them incontinent. From their remote villages, over miles of dusty steppes and sprawling lowlands, the women travel to the capital city to reclaim their dignity after years of social ostracism.

FistulaNetwork.org

A new Internet portal has been launched to exchange and share information about obstetric fistula. FistulaNetwork.org includes resources on prevention, treatment and reintegration as well as the latest news and updates on events and activities. Over time, country pages will map out the sites providing treatment care, the partners engaged in

supporting fistula and current activities. The new site, developed by UNFPA on behalf of the international Obstetric Fistula Working Group, is intended to serve as a tool to improve coordination and collaboration in the UNFPA Campaign to End Fistula. Partners are invited to register and submit information on events, activities, publications and more.

The Global Campaign to End Fistula

In 2003, UNFPA and partners launched a global Campaign to End Fistula. The Campaign is now active in more than 45 countries across Africa, Asia and the Arab region. The Campaign focuses on three key areas: preventing fistula, treating affected women, and supporting women after surgery. For more information, or to make a donation, visit www.EndFistula.org



THE PRESIDENT

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

EJS/MOS/RL/652/'08

July 30, 2008

Ms. Beryl Sten
President
ZONTA International zonta@tele2.se
cc. Zonta International
557 West Randolph Street
Chicago Il 60661, USA

Dear President Sten and members of ZONTA worldwide:

It is with great joy that I learned of your commitment to give US\$ 450,000 through the UN Population Fund for its work to contribute to the elimination of obstetric fistula and the reduction of maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity in Liberia.

Your generosity helps us to help the women who bear so much responsibility for the wellbeing of current and future generations in our country.

Thank you so very much. I look forward to saying thanks to you in person one day.

Sincerely,


Ellen Johnson Sirleaf



from the recently ended civil wars. During the fifteen years of fighting the healthcare system was all but destroyed, and most medical personnel were forced to leave the country. With so few medical facilities available, and limited access to even these facilities the rate of maternal mortality and morbidity increased dramatically. Currently, 578 out of every 100,000 pregnant women die in childbirth and many more face severe complications.

UNFPA will provide treatment, including medical supplies and equipment, free of cost, to women who cannot afford it. Specialty training will be offered to local doctors, raising the quality of care available. Those trained will in turn be able to teach the methods they have learned, increasing the number of people capable of performing the surgery and the number of women who will have access to care.

Many women need help reintegrating into society following treatment, having been isolated and scorned for so long. UNFPA will provide counseling to help with the transition, a new set of clothes for the women to begin their new lives and an

income-generating starter kit to help them learn to support themselves.

One of the difficulties surrounding treatment of obstetric fistula is the culture of silence that forbids its discussion. Many women, while aware of the effects of fistula, are not aware of its causes, and many do not know that there is treatment available. By educating women future cases of obstetric fistula will be prevented, and more women already affected will seek treatment. Education will also help to lessen the stigma attached to the women affected, as it is still a common belief that obstetric fistula is sent as a punishment for wrongdoing and is not seen as a valid medical condition.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.

Three key strategies:

Prevention

The most effective way to prevent fistula is to ensure access to quality maternal health care services, including family planning, skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care. In the long run, prevention also entails tackling underlying social and economic inequities through efforts aimed at empowering women and girls, enhancing their life opportunities, and delaying marriage and childbirth.

Treatment

Obstetric fistula is a treatable condition. A simple surgery can usually repair the injury, with success rates as high as 90 percent for uncomplicated cases.⁴

Rehabilitation

Fistula treatment goes far beyond repairing tissue. Many patients will need emotional, economic and social support after surgery to fully recover from their ordeal.

Notwithstanding laws in some countries that prohibit early marriage, 82 million girls in developing countries who are now aged 10 to 17 will be married before their 18th birthday.⁵

UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

1 WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA/The World Bank. Maternal Mortality in 2005. Geneva 2007: WHO.

2 WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA/The World Bank. Maternal Mortality in 2005. Geneva 2007: WHO.

3 WHO. 2006. Obstetric Fistula: Guiding Principles for Clinical Management and Program Development. Geneva: WHO.

4 WHO. 2006. Obstetric Fistula: Guiding Principles for Clinical Management and Program Development. Geneva: WHO.

5 UNFPA. 2005. State of World Population, p. 2.

Luella Hoffman: Her Life, Her Way

Zontian Luella Hoffman admits to living life “her way”. This philosophy of life and her trademark leadership marked her as a vital member of the Zonta International Board and the Zonta International Foundation. After forty years of dedicated service, Luella has been honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at an Annual Awards Banquet hosted by the Zonta Club of St. Charles-Geneva-Batavia, Illinois.

Luella grew up on a family farm with her three siblings; she attended a small country school with just twelve other students in her high school graduating class. After attending college at Bradley University and the University of Oklahoma, she moved to St. Charles, Illinois and began what would be a forty-year career in banking. Luella was promoted to bank officer in only eight years, was quickly identified as an expert in mortgage lending, and named vice president of the State Bank, now the Harris Bank.

In addition to her banking career and her faithful commitment to Zonta, “Lu” also served on governance boards in her community – among them a humane society, an addiction treatment center and a community college. In the early 1970’s she was elected and served as St. Charles City Clerk, all the while assisting other banks – always giving sound guidance for financial decisions.

Despite her dedication to the local community, Zonta and its mission have been Lu’s overriding passion. Shortly after she joined the Zonta Club of St. Charles-Geneva-Batavia in 1962, her talents for leadership were recognized. She served as club president from 1967-1969, then moved on to the district board where she served as area director and treasurer. Local club and district membership grew significantly during that time due to Lu’s mentoring and influence. During her tenure on her



district board, Lu also served as Zonta International’s finance chair, then assistant treasurer.

After her first convention in 1968, Lu never failed to attend nineteen consecutive Zonta International Conventions. She has traveled to twenty-three countries and has wonderful stories from each. During the 1976 convention in Germany, Luella was elected Zonta International treasurer and served three terms.

Lu was opposed to the 1986 purchase of the building on West Randolph Street in Chicago because she believed the costs of renovating the building from a “fish market” into respectable office space outweighed the benefits. It was despite, or because of her position on the building purchase, that Lu was elected to the Zonta International Foundation Board from 1993 until 1997, where she served as

treasurer (1993-1994) and later president (1995-1997). Following an extensive fundraising campaign during her time on the board, the foundation raised one million dollars to pay off the building’s mortgage. The final payment was made just ten years from the date of purchase. Upon completion of her years at the international level, Lu served as foundation ambassador for District 6.

Given her remarkable contributions, it should be no surprise that the college scholarships that the Zonta Club of St. Charles-Geneva-Batavia offer in

Luella’s honor were established more than 20 years ago. By the time you read this article, two very worthy young women will have received these scholarships, and Lu will have been there to congratulate them. Perhaps more importantly, the Zonta Club of St. Charles-Geneva-Batavia will have honored Luella Hoffman for a lifetime of dedication to Zonta International.

If you would like to send Lu cards and letters full of memories and good wishes they may be mailed to:

Luella M. Hoffman
Zonta Club of St. Charles-Geneva-Batavia
PO Box 811
St. Charles, IL 60174 USA

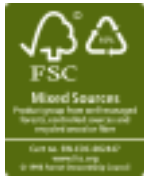
Submitted by Caryl Van Overmeiren
Zonta Club of St. Charles-Geneva-Batavia, Illinois, USA



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WELCOME NEW ZONTA CLUBS

The Zonta International "family" around the world extends a warm welcome to our new Zonta Clubs. We rejoice in the experience you will share with us and with those you serve!

De Haan, Belgium
District 27, Area 5

Leer-Ostfriesland, Germany
District 27, Area 3

Nidda-Oberhessen, Germany
District 28, Area 2

Greater Sacramento, United States
District 9, Area 1

Lier, Belgium
District 29, Area 6

Southern Ocean County, USA
District 3, Area 2

Koln 2008, Germany
District 29, Area 1

Metz, France
District 27, Area 2

Troy, USA
District 7, Area 2

La Union San Fernando City, Philippines
District 17, Area 4

Viborg, Denmark
District 13, Area 1

As of April 2008, Zonta International has 1,206 clubs in 67 countries and geographic areas.



Zonta Clubs

Members of Zonta International

Give to the Zonta International Foundation! Your gift of any size is appreciated and will support educational, international and violence prevention programs throughout the world. There are several ways to contribute, including by check, credit card or wire transfer.

A contribution form is necessary for any form of payment and may be downloaded at zonta.org, by selecting Zonta International Foundation from the menu on the left. A link to the contribution form is in the top right section of the page.